

**Remarks by GEN Wesley K. Clark
Outgoing EUCOM Commander in Chief**

Secretary and Mrs. Cohen, General and Mrs. Shelton, President Straub, Minister Schauble, General and Mrs. Jones, General Robertson, Admiral and Mrs. Abbot, Lord Mayor Schuester, Professor Doctor Rommel, component and subunified commanders, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, fellow soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines and coast guardsmen of the European Command. What a beautiful day for a ceremony and thanks to all of you for being here with us today.

Thank you so much Mr. Secretary for your presence and for your kind words. General Shelton thank you, and thanks to the officers and troops on the field, the pilots who flew over, the band from the 1st Infantry Division. What a good reminder of the profession of arms you are and the obligations that as members of the profession of arms we share.

Over the past almost 3 years, Gert and I have had the privilege to serve with you and to share in these military obligations. It has been a period of unprecedented activity: Ongoing peace support operations in Bosnia, noncombatant evacuations and planning from Africa, humanitarian deployments, patriot anti-missile battery deployments to the middle east and Turkey, ongoing daily air combat operations over northern Iraq and of course Operation Allied Force and the subsequent deployment of about 6,000 Americans to become part of the Kosovo force to preserve peace there. The successes in those operations have been due to the incredible teamwork at the top levels of this command.

I want to recognize and thank the top leaders. Our Deputy Commander in Chief, Admiral Steve Abbot, the Commander in Chief U.S. Naval Forces, Europe Admiral Jim Ellis, the Commanding General of the U.S. Army Europe, General Montgomery Meigs, the Commanding General of the U.S. Air Forces in Europe, General Gregg Martin, the Commanding General of U.S. Marine Forces Europe, Lieutenant General Pete Pace. Commanding General of the Special Operations Command Europe, Brigadier General Eldon Bargewell, and Command Sergeant Major Richard Young.

And it has also been due to the incredible performance of all of our soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines, coast guardsman, our civilians, the active and reserve components who have borne this unprecedented tempo with skill, determination and unfailingly high morale. Ladies and gentlemen won't you please recognize all the men and women of this command and those who stand before you today representing them.

I would like to express my special appreciation and admiration for Germany and the people of Germany. For over 50 years there's been a special bond between our American armed forces here and the people and government of this good land. We love your hospitality, culture, friendship and support. The alliance was formed, families were created, and a cold war was won on the strength of this bond. And during Operation Allied Force with our pilots and airmen at risk day after day, the government of Germany stood firm as a leader within NATO and the German people stood firm in supporting our unprecedented and successful action. Thank you.

But it is the memories of the people in uniform and out that Gert and I will take away. Those memories will be very, very strong as we leave this command. I remember the two female Army Signal troops at Tirana airfield in April of last year as we were trying to put Operation Allied Force in place there with Task Force Hawk. They were stuck with their humvee in hip deep mud trying to extract it -- all the while maintaining compliance with Army uniform requirements of flack jackets, helmets and weapons at sling arms.

I remember the incredible energy and interest of the junior enlisted soldiers and their wives who attended our Junior Enlisted Quality of Life Conference: Their good ideas, their enthusiasm for this profession of arms.

We remember the letters and the gifts we received during Operation Allied Force from people here in Germany encouraging us to continue to help right a tragic wrong under way.

I remember the cool courage of a group of F-16 pilots one night. They were off to their next mission over Serbia, that they were recounting as they went to their aircraft how they dodged a salvo of three anti-aircraft missiles on their previous flight. Total professionalism and confidence.

I think a lot about the sailors and marines and the soldiers and airmen on duty at a dozen base camps and on ships at sea during the holidays year in and year out, deployed and away from their families.

I'm especially proud of the enthusiastic teachers and faculty at our schools here and the eager young students at our schools.

This command, the U.S. European Command links Europe and the United States. It's the glue which binds American commitments across the Atlantic and provides the first means of military cooperation, support, or if necessary, action should the need arise. From the Cape of Good Hope to the North of Norway from the shores of France to the Caspian Sea.

It is the command which uniquely contributed to the winning of the Cold War and, at least from my vantage point on the Joint Staff four years ago before I came here, it was no doubt the busiest and most stressed of the commands today in facing the challenges of the post cold war period.

In every engagement and action in this command, we've been guided by two time-tested principles. Accomplish the mission and take care of the troops and that's what we did.

Yesterday in Kosovo I visited with the multi-ethnic interim administrative counsel and walked the streets of Pristina, you could see among the people there increasing sense of security, the indicators of recovery from the trauma of ethnic cleansing and even some first budding signs of willingness to tolerate ethnic differences and cooperate among ethnic groups. This above all would not have been possible with out the full wholehearted and courageous commitment of the men and women of this command over the last year.

I think we can take great pride together in what has been achieved thus far and I think we should face the future in confidence. With determination and courage in Kosovo and in the Balkans we will find the means and the ways to

help people there set right the historic wrongs of the beautiful but tragic region and to live together in peace.

Serving with you in all of these missions has been a tremendous honor and privilege and I thank you. Of course the missions will continue and so will the challenges. Joe and Dede, Gert and I wish you all the best as you assume these responsibilities here. We truly appreciate the challenges you will no doubt face, and we wish you every success. We look forward to hearing of the great accomplishments of this command under your leadership in months and months ahead.

To the men and women of EUCOM, Gert and I give our deepest gratitude and our highest respect. General Dwight D. Eisenhower, the man who really put the architecture together for this command and who was the first Supreme Allied Commander Europe once said, “If we think clearly enough, plan carefully enough and work tirelessly enough we can both secure freedom and preserve peace.” Together we have done all of that and more.

Men and women of EUCOM we bid you a fond farewell. Thank you.